



The Role of Prison Chaplains

Prison chaplains play a vital role in providing essential support to prisoners. In this edition of ICPO News, Fr. Ciarán Enright, Chaplain at Arbour Hill Prison in Ireland, examines the different aspects of this role and discusses how it is coming under threat.

What do you do in there all day? What are they like? Do you ever talk to the prisoners? Do many of them turn to religion because they're in prison?

These are just some of the questions people often ask when they hear that I am a prison chaplain. Such questions indicate a curiosity about prison life and also show how far removed from the reality of imprisonment most people will be unless they have had a direct experience of it. The men, women and children in our prisons are as ordinary as our brothers, sisters, sons or daughters. For every individual in prison there is a family directly affected by their

imprisonment and of course victims who are also immediately affected.

Imprisonment is a life changing experience where the loss of liberty brings a deep sense of vulnerability, powerlessness and isolation. The role of the prison chaplain is a privileged one where she/he is present to those in prison in a caring, supportive and non-judgemental way. Developing relationships of trust and respect with those in prison is at the heart of the chaplain's ministry.

It is in the context of these relationships that the dignity of the individual is affirmed and nurtured. As chaplains we always aim to be attentive to the needs and struggles of those in prison. These needs may be particularly acute at time of committal to prison or at times when family or personal crises emerge. We can help ease the individual's sense of isolation by being a link with family, support services and prison

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Katie Taylor Wins Gold for Ireland

One of the most exciting events of the summer was Katie Taylor's victory in the female lightweight boxing final at the 2012 London Olympics.

On 13th August more than 20,000 people turned out to welcome the Olympic champion back to her home town of Bray.



The ICPO

It is estimated that at any one time there are up to 1,000 Irish people in prison overseas. The ICPO has contact with Irish people in prisons in more than twenty countries, the majority of whom are in the UK with many more detained throughout the US, Australia, Europe, South and Central America and the Far East.

The Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) was established by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1985 in response to serious concerns regarding the number of Irish men and women in UK prisons. These deeply held concerns related to their trials and subsequent imprisonment.

In recent years the ICPO has been able to offer a more comprehensive service to prisoners and to expand our existing services to prisoners' families. Currently the ICPO works for all Irish prisoners wherever they are. It makes no distinction in terms of religious faith, the nature of the prison conviction, or of a prisoner's status.

The objectives of the ICPO are to:

- Identify and respond to the needs of Irish prisoners abroad, and their families;
- Research and provide relevant information to prisoners on issues such as deportation, repatriation and transfer;
- Focus public attention on issues affecting Irish prisoners (ill-treatment, racist abuse, etc);
- Engage in practical work in aid of justice and human rights for Irish migrants, refugees and prisoners at an international level;
- Visit Irish prisoners abroad where possible both in the UK and elsewhere.

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IRISH CATHOLIC
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
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AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
Department of Foreign Affairs

A Note From the Editor

Greetings from all at the ICPO.

In this edition of the newsletter, Ciarán Enright, Chaplain at Arbour Hill Prison in Dublin, discusses the important role of prison chaplains and how the number of chaplains has been greatly reduced over the last few years.

ICPO caseworker Catherine Jackson describes the system of Immigration Detention in the United States and examines the problems that detainees have experienced in the past.

Congratulations to S.B. and P.R., winners of the Short Story and Poetry Writing in Prison Overseas competitions at Listowel Writers' Week 2012. Bernie Martin attended this year's Listowel Writers' Week to accept these awards on behalf of our clients. In this edition she looks at the origins of the competition and describes what it was like to collect these awards from President Michael D. Higgins.

I would like to give a special thanks to everyone who entered the ICPO 'A Day in My Life' writing competition. We were delighted with the response and the standard of entries was extremely high. Congratulations to our winner, Peter Groome, and to all the other entrants for their fantastic work.

We are running an art competition to design the cover of this year's ICPO Christmas card. The deadline for entries is 16th November. Please see page 17 for more information.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to our letters page. I would also like to thank Eoin O'Mahony, author of the sports update, and Caitriona ní Bhaoill, author of 'Smídín Gaeilge'. We are very grateful to them for their contribution to ICPO News.

I would like to extend our sincere thanks to Mícheál O'Cearbhaill, former author of 'Smídín Gaeilge'. We are very grateful to Mícheál for his support over the years.

Finally, I would like to thank all the ICPO staff and volunteers for their hard work in putting this newsletter together.

Joanna Joyce
Coordinator

The Role of Prison Chaplains

Continued from Front Page

management. We also take on an important advocacy role in ensuring that every individual's rights and dignity are respected while they are in prison.

The role of the chaplain is a prophetic one rooted in the mission of Jesus who came to bring good news to the poor and freedom to those in prison. Jesus consistently associated himself with those who were despised and written off by society as sinners. He reached out to them offering them friendship, healing, forgiveness and the hope of a new beginning. Many who witnessed his compassionate approach, in particular those who held positions of leadership and authority, could not accept his closeness to sinners. Jesus, however, was uncompromising in his teaching and in his actions insisting that no one is ever written off in God's eyes.

The good news of the Gospel is one that reassures us that nothing can separate us from God's love. The chaplain is called to witness in word and action to this prophetic message, to be a bearer of hope that in Christ there is always the possibility of new beginnings. The sharing of this good news happens in the celebration of the sacraments as a prison community, and in daily caring for those in prison by being attentive to them in their various needs and struggles.

Prison chaplains are called to be prophetic in challenging a system that dehumanizes those in prison and is grossly deficient in responding to the needs of victims of crime. We are called to be a voice for the voiceless in calling for change that better honours the dignity of the human person. Accompanying prisoners and their families on a daily basis gives us a privileged insight which carries the responsibility to be courageous in offering a critique of this reality. Our views may often be dismissed and met with cynicism or hostility. This should never deter us from holding fast to the values that are at the heart of discipleship and ministry.

I regularly meet former prisoners out and about in the community. They often comment on the support they received from chaplains in various prisons. It always strikes me that it is the most basic human affirmation and support that they remember with gratitude. In what can often be a harsh and hostile environment they feel that they are seen by the chaplain as a person, an individual and not just identified by a number or by the crime that has brought them to prison. Likewise in visiting prisons in the UK I have seen how the chaplaincy service is a real lifeline of hope to so many prisoners of all faiths and indeed of no faith.

The Chaplaincy Services both in Ireland and the UK are struggling to maintain a level of service that allows chaplains to adequately fulfil their role. The number of chaplains has been greatly reduced over the last number of years. In Ireland, for example, no appointments have been made for over two years despite the many vacancies that have been created. This is an extremely worrying development and one that is felt deeply by prisoners and their families. While the reduction in the number of chaplains is largely due to Government policy in the current economic climate, the Church must also take responsibility. We are called as a faith community to embrace the mission of Christ and this must always involve reaching out to the marginalised in our prisons. Government policy will often change but we must be steadfast in our commitment to provide pastoral care to those in prison.

I believe that we need to develop a greater sense of ownership of this important mission. If we can do this we will make a valuable contribution, not only to those in prison, but to the wider community. In doing this we not only pray for the coming of God's Kingdom but actively work for that reality where there is always the possibility of new beginnings.

Ciarán Enright
Chaplain, Arbour Hill Prison

Immigration Detention in the United States

Under U.S. immigration law the vast majority of foreign nationals convicted of a crime will be deported. This includes those who may have come to the U.S. as young children but never acquired U.S. citizenship. Although some ICPO clients have been taken directly from prison to the airport for deportation, many have spent some time in immigration detention.

The immigration detention system in the U.S. is a patchwork of county jails, federal immigration detention centres and privately run prisons under contract to Immigration, Customs and Enforcement (popularly known as ICE). According to ICE statistics 363,000 people were detained in immigration detention during 2010. This is twice the number of people detained in 2006 and seven times the number of people detained in 1994.

There are rules that govern how state and federal inmates are treated, their access to lawyers and to their families and their right to medical treatment and recreation. However, the U.S. Government's heavy reliance on private companies to run immigration detention centres means that many immigration detainees are held in centres that are not required to comply with public record and access requirements. This lack of transparency and accountability has resulted in abuses. Private correctional companies spend millions of dollars in lobbying fees and political donations to sympathetic politicians to maintain the current system. Between 2003 and 2010 Corrections Corporation of America, one of the largest private correctional companies, spent \$14.8 million lobbying ICE, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, various Congressmen and Senators and other agencies (*'Who Benefits From the Prison Boom?'*, www.diversityink.com).

The ICPO has provided assistance to a number of clients who have experienced a wide range of problems while in immigration detention. ICPO clients have reported that conditions in these detention centres are often very poor. Detainees may be locked down for many hours a day with very few opportunities for recreation. Detainees report being especially frustrated with the lack of information about when they will actually be deported. Families of detainees report that their attempts to get information from ICE or prison officials are often ignored and their concerns about their family member are dismissed.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has filed a number of lawsuits against ICE challenging medical policies and the denial of necessary medical treatment to detainees. Inadequate and negligent medical care has resulted in serious medical conditions going untreated (*'System of Neglect'*, The Washington Post, 11 May 2008). Since 2003 more than 104 detainees have died while in immigration detention. The ACLU has expressed doubt that this figure provided by ICE is accurate.

Irish support organisations in the U.S. and Ireland are actively involved in advocating for the long overdue reform of the U.S. immigration detention system to ensure that all immigration detainees are detained in humane, safe conditions. These support organisations also provide essential practical and emotional support to those detained in these centres. The current lack of transparency and accountability means that U.S. immigration detention continues to be unfit for purpose.

If you are detained in the U.S. please keep in touch with the ICPO so we can continue to support you and monitor your situation.

Catherine Jackson
ICPO Caseworker



Taking Care of Your Mental Health

While we all know how important it is to take care of our physical health, many people forget that it is just as important to take care of your mental health. This is especially true for prisoners overseas who may be facing significant difficulties and experiencing feelings of anxiety and depression. Being separated from your family and friends can be particularly difficult to cope with so it is very important that you find ways to take care of yourself.

If possible you should try to stay in touch with your friends and family. Although this may be difficult it is important to stay connected to people who will be there to support you through hard times. If you would like to stay in touch with everyday life in Ireland you can apply to take part in the ICPO Pen Friend Scheme. This scheme is open to all Irish citizens in contact with the ICPO and can help to alleviate loneliness and isolation.

Try to keep busy if possible. Consider taking some classes or courses if you can. Try to get regular exercise as this will help to alleviate stress and improve your mood. Make time to do things that you enjoy and that help you to relax.

Try to support other prisoners when they are going through a difficult time. Often if we're focused on helping others it helps us to forget about our own problems for a while. It also reminds us that we're not alone and that most people feel down from time to time. If you are in prison in the UK you might consider taking part in the Listener Scheme. This scheme operates in most prisons in England, Scotland and Wales. It involves selected prisoners being trained and supported by Samaritans to listen in confidence to their fellow prisoners who might need support.

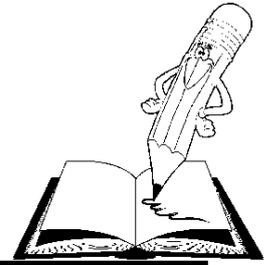
If you are having difficulty coping and need help, please tell someone. Reach out to your family or friends within the prison or speak to someone in the medical or chaplaincy departments. Most importantly, remember that you are not alone and that there are people there to help and support you.

If you need help and support or are interested in the ICPO Pen Friend Scheme please contact us at ICPO, Columba Centre, Maynooth, Co. Kildare or ICPO, 50-52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB.

What Do You Want to Read About?

We want to know what our clients are interested in reading about so if there are any topics or issues that you would like to see covered in *ICPO News* please contact our Maynooth office.

Listowel Writers' Week 2012



John B. Keane was born in Listowel in Co. Kerry in 1928. He spent most of his life there except for a brief sojourn in London from 1951-1955. He married Mary O'Connor in 1955 and they settled in Listowel where John B. bought a pub. In 1959 his first play *SIVE* was presented by the Listowel Drama Group and won the All Ireland Drama Festival. *SIVE* was followed by many more successes, among them *Big Maggie* and *The Field*, which was later made into a film with Richard Harris as the Bull McCabe and Brenda Fricker as his long suffering wife. His plays have been performed as far away as Moscow, Los Angeles and Broadway. His novels also have won much acclaim. His first book was *The Bodhrán Makers*, followed by *The Contractors* and *Durango* which was also made into a film starring Brenda Fricker and Patrick Bergin.

In an interview with Brendan Kennelly, John B. Keane said "bitterness is an awful weight to carry, it creates nothing. The one great power man has is the power to forgive, he can forgive at an instant any wrong that has ever been done to him". John B. Keane knew people; he loved the human person despite their warts and callouses. He took the best and worst characteristics of those he met and wove them into fine characters that jumped out of the pages of his books.



This statue of John B. Keane was specially commissioned in recognition of his contribution to the world of literature.

Characters like Canon Peter Pius Tett, from the *Bodhrán Makers*, a self-righteous bully whose one ambition was to rule the good people of Trallock with an iron fist, or Maggie Poplin (*Big Maggie*), a tough woman determined to

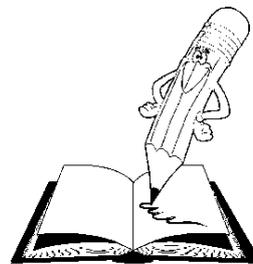
harden her children for life's injustices and driving them away with her brutality. For each tyrant there are the kind gentle souls who more often than not triumph over the brutes by just being honest, upright and good. He wrote of his Kerry countryside, the townlands, hills, rivers, bogs and little villages. The relationship between farmer and his land, the passion and the sacrifice a man makes for the good piece of land tended and farmed by his father and grandfather before him, which may not even be his. The devilment in John B. shone out of him as on one occasion when he was a guest on the *Late Late Show*. He spoke about Kerry hours, never ladies of course but any sort of Kerry man. There were nine grades of hours, he said, and every Kerry man fell into one of these categories. Gay Byrne didn't seem to know how to handle this one and babbled and giggled until that section came to an end.

John B. Keane and Brian McMahon started Listowel Writers' Week hoping that it would serve to celebrate Irish writers and provide a platform for up and coming writers. The festival was a great success from the start and has gone from strength to strength, now accepting entries from all over the world. President Higgins was invited to officially open the 2012 Listowel Writers' Week. He is a man of words. He is a clever, intelligent and wise man and I could happily sit for hours listening to him talk. He is a writer and a poet and has had three books of poems published.

I was asked to attend the Festival launch this year in the Listowel Arms Hotel. I would be collecting a prize on behalf of two clients of the ICPO. This was a task I was happy to do as I have been bowled over on a number of occasions by the stories and poems sent to our office by clients. There is an honesty and spirituality in the writing that comes from the soul and makes you question your own life, what you have and what you take for granted on a daily basis.

When I arrived in Listowel for the launch there was a flurry of excitement at the hotel. President Higgins had just arrived and had been taken off somewhere for a photograph session. There was a sea of people in the lobby spilling out into the street. Children in maroon school uniforms were talking excitedly and people were checking cameras and phones to see if they got a good picture of the President and his wife. The atmosphere was electric and you could not but be caught up in the excitement. I checked in and was taken to the large function room where the launch was being held. The room was full to

Listowel Writers' Week 2012



President Michael D. Higgins, accompanied by his wife Sabina, arriving at the prize giving ceremony.

bursting point and my companion and I found a space at the back near the door but directly facing the stage. There were a lot of people coming and going, official looking men with name tags whose focus seemed to be on crowd control, moving people here and there and trying to keep the doorway clear. Some ladies were dressed to kill; others wore jeans and T-shirts and others went the smart-casual route. Two young children about three and four years old were fed up being good and sat on the floor playing with cars and little men figures. The pattern on the carpet provided them with roadways and they were blissfully unaware of the goings on above them. Soon enough I was drawn into their little world of cars and crashes and I wondered at the imagination that could take them away so quickly from our adult world.

As the audience waited for the arrival of the President, there was entertainment in the form of singing from Claire Keane (Voice of Kerry winner) and harpist Aoife Ni Argain. After a time there was a sudden flurry and fuss and the double doors swung open. Everyone's attention was drawn to the figures coming through the doorway. I spotted President Higgins and his wife Sabina entering the room. The President shook hands with a few people as he walked along. The excitement had reached fever pitch by now, cameras flashed and there was thunderous applause as President Higgins and Sabina walked up the centre of the room towards the stage. Introductions were made and the President and his wife were warmly welcomed. They took their place on two chairs at the back of the stage and smiled and beamed as they received yet another round of applause. When President Higgins was called on to speak he walked over to the podium and a silence descended

on the room. His opening remarks were as usual spoken in Irish translated immediately into English. Michael D. said *"It is always very, very encouraging, in these challenging and difficult times to come to occasions like this and to see and be reminded once again of what a wonderfully creative, inventive and original people we are in this country"*. He spoke with passion about the arts and the need for rebuilding, not just our country and its economy but also the need to develop creativity in our communities and to *"ensure that each child and adult has the opportunity for creative expression"*. The speeches finished and the time had come for the presentation of prizes.

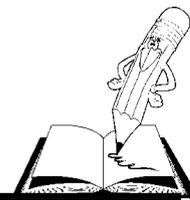
Each prize was announced and the winners went forward to receive their prize. There were many different categories for novels, short stories, poems and similar categories for children and young people. Just when I thought we were forgotten, the ICPO category was announced and my name was called to come forward and receive the prizes on behalf of our writers. I was a proud woman walking up the whole length of that hall. I took my time and smiled and greeted the man who was presenting the prize. I smiled at President Higgins and walked towards the stage. He got up from his chair and came forward to shake my hand. I invited him to visit our office in Maynooth and he said "I certainly will". I stood for photographs and retraced my steps to the back of the room.

The following day I bought *The Bodhrán Makers*, a story of rural Ireland in the 1950's and *The Contractors*, a story of Irish men working in England. I am really enjoying exploring the people and places of Kerry through the writings of John B. Keane.

This year is the 10th anniversary of John B. Keane's death. He is sadly missed by his family and by the people of Listowel but so much of him and his words live on and enrich their lives still. John B. and Michael D. are two great men who shape lives and communities through their love of literature and the arts. I thank my office for giving me the opportunity to go to the Listowel Writers' Week. I thank the Listowel Writers' Week committee for making me feel welcome and I thank our own two ICPO writers whose words shaped that particular weekend for me.

Bernie Martin
ICPO Maynooth

Listowel Writing in Prisons Overseas Competition 2012



★ WINNER: Short Story
Writing in Prisons Overseas

The Galley

Jeff the Chef, a large bald-headed bear-like creature, eyed the black cast iron stove with malevolent hatred. The stove, in its defence, responded with a heated expression. The standoff between the two old adversaries had been re-ignited that morning, after Jeff was convinced he'd successfully foiled an assassination attempt by the pile of useless metal. The stove refused to be baited. Blankly ignoring the chef's accusations.

Under a large cupboard, the ship's unwanted residents eyed the confrontation with relish. Jeff the Chef was always guaranteed to put on a show for the unwelcome guests.

Jeff moved towards the large chunky wooden table that lay centralised in the galley. Swigging a deep gulp from a notoriously toxic liquor from a large bottle, instantly became dizzy, swayed, vomited, before head-butting the large galley table which under such an unexpected attack, collapsed into a pile of splintered wood and an unconscious chef. Volcanic laughter erupted from under a certain cupboard.

Ten minutes later, a moan escaped from the wreckage. A creature of nightmares emerged. Panic erupted under the cupboard but quickly ceased as it was discovered that it wasn't some demon from the depths of the abyss but Jeff the Chef emerging from his unconscious cocoon.

Jeff cursed the day they invented hard floors, rotten tables and that back stabbing stove which seemed to be glowing in evil delight. Jeff gathered himself, eyed the

once proud table and shook his head. The sudden moans of hunger from up on deck alerted the mad chef that breakfast was overdue, deciding that this morning was perfect for one of his infamous breakfasts. Jeff's infamous meals were a thing of legendary horror. Strongly rumoured that even the sharks in the great oceans were gunning for retribution after one of Jeff's breakfast had been 'accidentally' lost overboard. The surprise and delight at this unexpected feast quickly turned to fury and outrage. The sharks demanded compensation or at least a well-deserved apology.

A well vocalled reminder of the plight of the hungry pirates came howling down the gangway, into the semi-destroyed galley and putting the wind up Jeff the Chef.

Sounds of rummaging was causing suspicion and curiosity amongst the local spectators when suddenly, out of the darkness, appeared an apparition of nightmare proportions. The sight of the grease-layered, blackened monstrosity that was the galley frying pan caused a wave of horror to pass through the ranks of the on-lookers. It was said that if it passed near water, it would hiss and spit like a vampire exposed to sunlight.

Jeff moved towards the stove. The demonic frying pan waved about as if the Chef was conducting an invisible orchestra. The stove hotly refused to dance to Jeff's patronising tune. Finally, after an impressive amount of oaths, threats and drunken antics, the godforsaken frying pan found its resting place. Into the pan went Jeff's infamous breakfast ingredients: eggs, their shells, some furry rash-



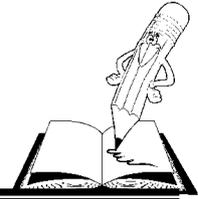
ers, an impressive selection of multi-coloured bread slices, a thumb nail and Jeff's false teeth.

Jeff was pleased, yet something was vitally missing. Ah - sausages. He spun around, glared balefully at the galley, as if expecting the sausages to meekly come out of hiding. He was going to be sorely disappointed. Muttering under his breath, Jeff blindly manoeuvred himself around the galley.

Suddenly a large box appeared out of the gloom. Jeff, unaware of its presence, side swiped it, before quite spectacularly arm wrestling a large wall-shelf. The contents of the shelf, a selection of baking powders, unused to such strong arm tactics, exploded in a cloud of white dust. To a passer-by the thought of why something resembling a large snow storm had mysteriously taken up residence in the ship's cupboard was indeed cause for concern. Nearby, a large cupboard was rocking dangerously from the earth-shaking laughter that was emerging from under it.

Jeff the Chef eventually untangled himself from this latest expedition, resulting in more unwanted destruction. The large box, fully responsible for Jeff's latest display of acrobatics, lay quietly on its side, a large

Listowel Writing in Prisons Overseas Competition 2012



boot print now added to its gaudy appearance. Jeff, quite literally covered in white powder, dragged the accursed box across the galley floor.

Jeff bent over the large rectangular box, brushing away dust with a large paw, in turn exposing letters as if by magic. Through red-tinged eyes, he tried to make sense of the strange letters D.Y.N.A.M.I.T.E. Jeff was baffled, unable to understand what type of fool would call sausages such a stupid name. The locals for their part were enjoying the morning's entertainment. Now they eagerly awaited the next stage of Jeff's destructive warpath through the galley.

Jeff tore the lid off the box. Staring down at the neat row of brown tubular sticks, quite amazed at how the butchers took great care in their packing. Reaching in, Jeff grabbed a large handful and placed them on top of the growing amount of garbage that was the morning's breakfast. But something was wrong and Jeff was struggling to figure out what that something was.

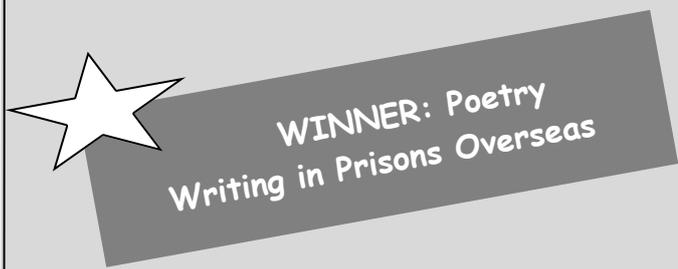
The Galley rats had already figured it out and were quickly erecting barricades in a desperate hope that they would be safe. Suddenly Jeff's alcohol soaked brain sparked into life. Shocked, he figured what the problem was and started to panic. Quickly, Jeff searched through his pockets, found what he was seeking and felt relief.

Once lit, the white strings that were hanging out of the top of the sausages would sizzle up and cook the interior of the sausage. A wave of relief washed over the chef. Producing the box of matches he had been searching for, he moved towards the stove, eyeing it distrustfully for any sneaky moves. Quickly lighting the loose strings, he watched joyfully as the fuses sizzled away. Jeff the Chef started to sing and dance. The explosion put a well-paid and deserving end to that.

Jeff the Chef shot through the air before dive bombing a very large cupboard. The latter virtually came apart in a hail of splinters, utensils, rats and Jeff's left boot. The galley now resembled the aftermath of a nuclear blast. The fallout consisting of a hundred plus dizzy rats and one unconscious half-scorched, one booted galley chef.

It would be honourable to admit that Jeff the Chef's morning didn't go quite to plan but he sure as hell gave the blasted stove a good send-off.

S.B., UK



Loneliness in the Crowd

Loneliness is vast my friend
When you lose yourself deep
Within the crowds,
As you step out for a while to
Question all of this.
When you're surrounded by yells and shouts
As you stand with your mind afar
Staring out of your eyes -
The silence sets your mind ajar.

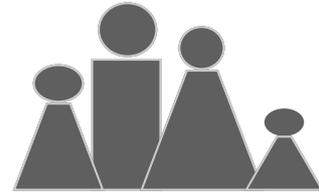
Why am I here? Where do I go next?
What is the reason for me to exist in this?
I'm here within a crowd that I don't even know.
I've only come here to watch the bands playing in this show...

Loneliness is vast my friend.
I saw you as you stood still.
I've been there myself at the Glastonbury show.
Only from my TV did I see you showing me
The same feelings that I tend to know.

Loneliness is vast my friend,
Even in this prison cell,
But I'm much harder now.
My feelings of loneliness I do not show for sadness is a weakness
Here to be stowed away each and every day,
But the loneliness is still vast inside of me my friend.

P.R., UK

FAMILY ISSUES



This section is for families who have a loved one in prison.
Do you have useful information that may be helpful to other families?
Have you a question you would like to see answered on this page in the future?
If so, please contact Brian Hanley, Caseworker, ICPO Maynooth.

Assisted Prison Visits Scheme in Northern Ireland & the UK

Can I get help with the cost of visiting someone in prison if I live in Northern Ireland, England, Wales or Scotland?

If you are a close relative or partner of a prisoner and you are in receipt of certain benefits or on a low income then you may be eligible for assistance with your travel costs under the Assisted Prison Visits Scheme (APVS).

Who can apply?

Close relative is defined as wife, husband, civil partner, natural or adoptive mother, father, sister, brother, son, grandparent, step/half-brother/sister, step child, step parent or someone who has acted in *loco parentis* for a significant part of the prisoner's childhood. A partner can be someone in a heterosexual relationship or a same sex relationship with the prisoner. If a partner is claiming APV they must have been living together and claiming benefits as a couple prior to imprisonment.

You can also apply for assistance if you meet all other criteria and you are not a close relative of the prisoner but you are the sole visitor to that prisoner.

You may also be eligible for assistance if you are escorting a qualifying young person or adult to visit someone in prison. (Please request the APVU Customer Service Guide for more information.)

Who qualifies for help?

To qualify for assistance under the scheme you must first be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Based (not contribution based) Job Seeker's Allowance
- Tax Credit
- Pension Credit

You may be eligible for help under the scheme if you are not in receipt of any of the above benefits but are on a low income and hold a Health Certificate 2 or 3. These applicants must request a special application form.

Which prisons can I visit?

The scheme will provide a contribution to the cost of making a prison visit to all prison establishments in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. People living in Northern Ireland may avail of help under this scheme to visit family members in prison in the UK. This is also the case for those living in the UK with family members imprisoned in Northern Ireland.

How often can I visit?

Help is normally provided with the cost of two visits every 28 days and up to a maximum of 26 visits in a year. This limit is applicable whether the prisoner is on remand or has been convicted or sentenced. Assisted visits can be saved up to allow two or more consecutive visits to take place during one return journey when visiting someone in another jurisdiction (e.g. travelling from Northern Ireland to England).

How do I apply?

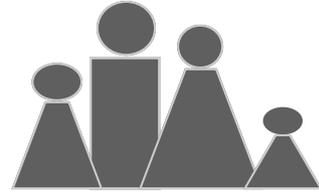
Northern Ireland:

In order to receive an APV you should ask your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits Office or Pension Service for form PV9 which you should fill in and return to them within 28 days of the earliest visit claimed. If you apply at a later time they will have to decide if there is a good reason for the application being late before it can be accepted. If you do not automatically qualify for help, you will also need to fill in form HC1. In the case of visits to a prison in Great Britain, due to the additional costs of travelling outside of Northern Ireland, payment towards a visit can be made in advance.

Each time you claim you should attach the 'Confirmation of Visit' form (issued by the prison or the Visitors' Centre to confirm that the visit has taken place) to form PV9. Form PV9 should be completed for 2 visits at a time. These visits can be taken on separate dates. All tickets/receipts for transport and accommodation must be retained in case NIPS request these at a later date.

United Kingdom:

All qualifying visitors should complete an application



form. In addition, a 'Confirmation of Visit' slip will need to be stamped on arrival at the prison in order to validate the claim. The completed application form should be posted to the Assisted Prison Visits Unit (APVU, PO Box 2152, Birmingham, B15 1SD), within 28 days of making the visit along with proof of expenses. It may be possible to apply for advance payments. Visitors should contact the APVU or ICPO for guidance in making such an application.

What does the scheme cover?

The scheme will contribute towards the cost of travel to the prison by rail, road, bus, private motor vehicle, car hire, coach, ferry, taxi and air travel. The reimbursement of taxi fares is restricted in certain circumstances, therefore it is better to check this before making the journey. It is important to retain all tickets and receipts relating to the journey as these will need to be provided for reimbursement. You do not need to obtain receipts for petrol when travelling by private motor car as the cost of making the journey will be paid on a per mile basis based on the total distance between the visitor's home and the prison.

If the journey is particularly difficult, significantly long or there is limited public transport you may be eligible to claim for some assistance towards the cost of an overnight stay. Other factors will be taken into account when claiming so it is important to check eligibility prior to arranging any accommodation.

The cost of a registered child minder/after school club or similar may be considered if you do not wish to take a qualifying child under the age of 16 to the prison. Payment of overnight allowances and other subsistence costs (food etc.) may also be permitted.

Who can help me apply?

While generally speaking the scheme works in a straightforward way, you might wish to contact ICPO or the other

organisations listed below for advice and assistance in the initial phases. Please note that as people's circumstances vary it is not possible to include every piece of information about the scheme here.

ICPO

Columba Centre
Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland
Tel: 00353-1-505-3156 Fax: 00353-1-629-2363
Email: icpo@iecon.ie

ICPO

50-52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB
Tel: 0207-482-4148 Fax: 0207-482-4815
Email: prisoners@irishchaplaincy.org.uk

NIACRO

Amelia House, 4 Amelia Street, Belfast BT2 7GS,
Northern Ireland
Tel: 028 9032 0157 Fax: 087 0432 1415
Email: niacro@niacro.co.uk

Assisted Prison Visits Unit

PO Box 2152, Birmingham, B15 1SD, England
Tel: 03000 632100 (10.15-11.45 and 14.15-15.45 Mon-Fri)
Email: assisted.prison.visits@hmps.gsi.gov.uk

Web Links to Assisted Prison Visits Information Booklets

Northern Ireland:

<http://niprisonsservice.dev.biznetprojects.co.uk/uploads/docs/Assisted%20Visits%20pdf.pdf>

United Kingdom:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/contacts/noms/assisted-prison-visits/assisted-prison-visits.pdf>

Help for Families

The imprisonment of a loved one can be a devastating experience. We're here to help reduce the burden faced by prisoners and their families.

If you need information, advice or someone to talk to please contact the ICPO on 01-5053156.

Update from London ICPO Office

It seems no time since our last Letter and here we are again in Autumn after one of the worst summers in recent times in terms of weather.

The London office staff members have been busy keeping pace with the volume of letters, phone calls, and casework resulting from prison visits. We have a new prison visitor, **Amanda Evans**, based near Nottingham, who will visit prisons in the East Midlands (taking in cities like Derby, Leicester and Nottingham). Amanda joins our visitors' team of Sr Maureen McNally (south-west), Sally Murphy (Merseyside), and Kate O'Hara (Manchester). We hope to have another visitor in place for the Leeds area before the end of the year.

A highlight of the summer was the Sponsored Walk in Co. Mayo undertaken by some 20 staff members and volunteers. The Walk from Mulranny to Newport and entitled, "In the Footsteps of Irish Emigrants", raised over £3,000. The weather on the day was good and we were delighted to have staff members from the Maynooth office join us.



WHY PRISONS?

Another highlight of the summer was the talk given by **Andrew Coyle** to a select group of people concerned about prisons and imprisonment. It was organised by the PPMI (Progressing Prisoners Maintaining Innocence) Group, and entitled: What are prisons for? What is their contribution to public safety and security? Professor Coyle, an ex-prison governor, and now a worldwide authority on prisoners and their improvement, stated that the only "punishment" imprisonment should impose is a loss of liberty. Drawing on his worldwide experience of prisons, he said that while some of the worst examples of prison life came from South America, so too did some of the most imaginative ways of helping prisoners to help themselves. A link

between books read and remission was one of the most surprising. So too was the "green reward" in Brazil where remission was gained by those willing to pedal their way to renewable energy on exercise bikes!

On the issue of rehabilitation he stated that some of the courses that prisoners are meant to take to prove their future good behaviour, are often hurdles preventing release. He was also critical of the involvement of the private sector in the running of prisons and the fact that a prisons "industry" is developing at an alarming rate. However, he ended his talk with a number of positive recommendations including the following: imprisonment should be only for those who have committed the worst of crimes; the number of prisoners should be drastically reduced; prison staff should be recruited locally; courts should be in touch with those they have sentenced; local resources should be made available while in prison and afterwards; and there should be as much local involvement as possible. He concluded by saying that while we struggle to find a better way to deal with those who commit crime, we must never forget our common humanity.

REMAND PRISONERS

According to the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nick Hardwick, remand prisoners in England and Wales are treated no better than sentenced prisoners. Each year as many as 29,400 people who are remanded in custody are released straight after trial because they have been acquitted or have not received a jail sentence.

There are between 12,000 and 13,000 remand prisoners held at any one time, spending an average of nine weeks inside. This figure represents 15% of all prisoners, with women and minority ethnic groups over-represented in relation to the population. Despite the principle that remand prisoners should have rights not available to sentenced prisoners, many in fact have less access to support services and less preparation for release. It is now the "norm" for remand prisoners to share a cell with a sentenced inmate despite it being expressly forbidden.

A recent report (August 2012) of inspections at 33 prisons and fieldwork at a further five says that such inmates are at increased risk of suicide and self-harm. The report, written by the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nick Hardwick, states that nearly a quarter of those interviewed said they felt depressed or suicidal when they arrived at prison. Prisoners said that few staff could distinguish between remand and sentenced prisoners on the wings and had lim-

Update from London ICPO Office

ited knowledge of their entitlements. Almost half of those interviewed reported difficulty getting information about applying for bail. Many reported problems maintaining contact with solicitors as they could not get access to a phone. More than half of unconvicted prisoners reported spending less than four hours daily out of their cells on weekdays, although all had the right to choose to work or to go to education classes.

IPP UPDATE

The Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) has recently been passed by parliament but many of its new provisions may not come into force for some time. They will first have to be 'enacted' to become law. So, although the IPP sentence is being abolished, this has not happened yet. The IPP sentence will be replaced with new determinate, extended, and life sentences. The new sentences are expected to come into practice by the end of this year after which time the IPP sentence will no longer be given out.

One provision that has come in already is the power to deport people who are not UK citizens and on IPP sentences and life sentences. This is called the Tariff Expired Removal Scheme (TERS) and happens when a prisoner's tariff finishes. Instead of the parole board reviewing their case, the Public Protection Casework Section at headquarters can decide whether they fit the rules for deportation. Once the decision has been made that someone can be removed, the immigration authority (UKBA) will review this and issue a deportation order. However, the new scheme does not affect someone's right to appeal against deportation.

It is important to note that TERS does not apply to Irish nationals who cannot be deported following the agreement between the British and Irish governments in February 2007.

CALL CENTRES INSIDE PRISONS

The Ministry of Justice is planning to set up call centres inside some prisons as part of its work programme for prisoners. Details of plans have emerged from marketing material from an MOJ-supported company, which described the call centre scheme as a "rehabilitation revolution".

At face value it looks like a promising ideal: training prisoners to become qualified contact centre operators, giving them employment during their prison term and preparing them for a more productive life after release. However,

peel away the rhetoric and the packaging and the idea seems less like a "rehabilitation revolution" and more like a clever marketing scheme for the companies involved.

A flyer sent to certain prisons last year touting the idea, spoke of the opportunities for organisations to develop a higher corporate responsibility profile by engaging in a high-profile initiative supported by the Ministry of Justice, with lower costs and overheads for trained contact centre agents, flexible resources that could deal with overflow calls and specific projects, "all dedicated to growing and supporting your business".

This is hardly the language of a prisoner rehabilitation programme! It is also unclear how much prisoners would be paid in this scheme given that the going rate is £3 per day for prisoners on "work experience", a figure set by the prison governor over which companies would have no control. It all smacks of "cheap labour" packaged as rehabilitation and sold as contributing to the UK economy.

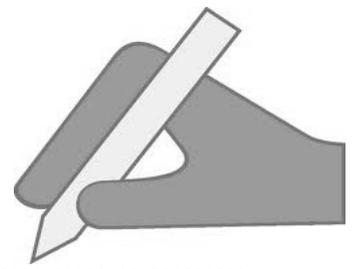
A serious rehabilitation programme, on the other hand, would see the huge sums of money involved in setting up this scheme invested in educating prisoners in literacy and numeracy and helping them acquire skills such as bricklaying, joinery, painting and decorating - skills surely better suited to their future employment needs (and those of society) than call centre work!

IN MEMORY OF GERARD MCGRATH (1946 - 2012)

Gerard McGrath passed away peacefully on 9th July in the Macmillan unit of Bristol Hospital. Thanks to the compassion of the Governor and staff at HMP Leyhill, he was released on temporary licence which enabled him to spend his last days with his family. I had the privilege of visiting him in the hospital a matter of days before he died. Gerard used his great gift with words to inspire others through his letters and articles, mostly in the prison paper, Inside Time. At his funeral his mother was presented with cards from fellow prisoners at Leyhill, one of whom said that Gerard's writing had inspired him to change and how Gerard supported him when he eventually got to meet him at Leyhill. Despite spending most of his life in England, Gerard requested that his ashes be returned to his native Dublin and sprinkled on the Liffey. Our thoughts are with his mother, his rock at all times, his brother, daughters and extended family. May he rest in peace.

Fr. Gerry McFlynn
ICPO Project Manager

ICPO Writing Competition



Thank you to everyone who entered the 'A Day in My Life' writing competition and shared their day-to-day experiences with us. We were absolutely delighted with the response to the competition and the standard of entries was extremely high. Congratulations to all the entrants for their fantastic work and to our winner, Peter Groome.



Winning Entry

A Day in My Life By Peter Groome (Jazz), USA

When I read there was a competition going on for ICPO clients, to write something about 'A Day in My Life', it made me think about something, 'who would want to read such a miserable article?' However, it would be wrong of me not to contribute something about my situation because some of my Irish brothers and sisters who are incarcerated around the world have it worse than me and need to know that they are not alone and that I pray for all of 'us' and our loved ones.

My day starts at 6:30am to the sound of a whistle that the Correction Officer (Screw) blows, to make sure everyone is standing by their cell door for major count. There are those who are too tired to blow the whistle because they're just waking up from their hard night's work so they just yell at the top of their voice 'count-time' and they do it as loud as they can to let us know whose house we're in. At around 7:20am another whistle to let us know it's chow time. Depending on what they have, I might go down. If they're serving grits, powdered eggs or something they call cream of wheat, I just stay in the cell and make a cup of tea and have something I bought in the canteen.

At 8:30am, we have a general movement which means the men sign out with the screw to their destination, i.e. school (when they have it), work call for those who have a job (1,500 inmates, 325 jobs). 8:30am is also the time we bring out our mail to the mail officer, where they check the inmates I.D. to make sure that the right person is on the return address.

At 9:15am another whistle to let us know that the medication line is open, which I attend every morning with the exception of Tuesdays and Thursdays when I go twice a day for weekly injections for arthritis.

Programs are few and far between in the prison system in the state of Massachusetts and if one is a lifer, like myself, the wait can be seven years to get in as they only allow one of us in every new course that begins, so if a course starts every 12 months, with one lifer in each class, one might kick the bucket before getting a spot.

So, what do I do? I direct the Catholic choir here at MCI, Norfolk and attend prayer groups. The choir practice is on Sunday nights at 6:00pm-8:30pm (after they blow another whistle). We have ten guys in the choir, including two instruments until September, when we'll add another two instruments. On Monday night we celebrate Holy Mass, where an average of 120 men gather. Saturday afternoons I have weekly rosary group with about 27 of the other men, it's a nice group where we get to pray together and pray for all those who are in the same situation around the globe. Tuesday afternoon, about eight of us meet in the Catholic Chaplains Office for a group called Themes & Scriptures, we read a book together over a period of months and discuss it in the group. We've had no chaplain here (Catholic) for over a year now, but it has made us closer in the community as we go the extra mile to keep things up to scratch. On Wednesday afternoon I go to the music program to play my guitar and sing Irish ballads. Thursday afternoon I sing in a blues band for a couple of hours (if they open the band room). Winter and Fall, I attend Boston University's Metropolitan College Program which has 'Nothing' to do with the prison, except they let the professors teach in the prison. This program is funded by a scholarship that was set up 40 years ago by some alumni. The degree offered is a Bachelors Degree in Liberal Studies. I need eight more courses to graduate.

ICPO Writing Competition



Thoughts on how I found myself in prison? I struggle with these thoughts because they're many. I wish I'd got help with my problems when I was a kid. I feel like I fell through the cracks in the school system and more could have been done to keep me in school. It seems that nobody cared what age a kid fell out of school. School wasn't a good time for me. I wish I had listened to those who cared about me instead of trying to drink my problems away, which in the end became my biggest down-fall.

Conditions in the prison? The prison was built for 800 inmates but the count is 1,500 at the minute, water restrictions are the norm. It seems like every week something else is getting taken away, strip searches are the norm when an inmate goes on a visit, this is very degrading especially when none of the contraband is coming through the visits, the screws do the muling but our visitors pay the price. Suicides in this state are the highest in the United States at 3-4 times the national average in one of the smallest prison populations (11,600). Many of the screws forget that the inmates were sentenced by judge and jury so they like to resentence and punish people all over again, mostly the weak among the inmates, not all are bad but there are many bad eggs. Of course, there are many things for us to do and plenty of yard time during this time of year. Men work out in the gym, go to the library, play guitars, keyboards and attend church services but tension and stress is high most of the time and there is no shortage of informers, sadly, we are our own worst enemy, 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly'.

Hopes, Dreams and Coping:

Well, like most prisoners, my hopes and dreams are to be home someday. I dream about places that I really would like to spend time at. I think about Glendalough and Antrim, to name but a few. I think of how many people I would like to help before they get into trouble, i.e. the importance of staying in school, the terrible affects of depression when left untreated and how trying to drink away whatever the problems are in ones life is not the answer. I think about how I would like to visit as many youth clubs, schools, homeless shelters, mental health facilities and so on, where maybe something I say will help some person who might be in the place I was all those years ago.

Most of all, I think of how nice it would be to bring some peace to my mother's life by coming home and treating her like a Queen. The dream of meeting my nieces and nephews, who I have never met, because I was in prison when they were born, with the exception of two nephews and a niece who were just babies at that time. And, of course, there are my own brothers and sisters who I would like to see and try make up for all the pain I've brought into their lives. I guess all those things are how I cope, the dreams and hopes, but then one has to keep it real and face the fact that the chances are slim to none of these things happening. The coping comes in faith and knowing that when everything is said and done Christ will never leave me alone. Believing in something one cannot see is hard for many of us, but I say if we look all around us and see anything that is good, well that's where Christ is. It's very hard for men like myself to talk to people on the outside about what it means to be a Catholic because sadly, many people think, 'oh here's another one who found religion in prison'. I just found there was more than going to Mass on Sunday and understand now that the readings I was half hearing the priest and the readers proclaim, are more than just stories, they are the blueprint for what I should be doing, if I am really a believer in Christ.

And yes, there are those who do find faith in prison after being away for a variety of reasons and some for the first time, but like I said to some of the screws in here, 'Does it really matter, once they've found Christ, how they found him?' We've all got our stuff, unfortunately many in the joint only see others. So I guess this story has gone on a little of course and I could keep writing about the sadness in my heart every day for my victim and all those others who are broken-hearted, all I have is my prayers for each of them and if God wills it, maybe I'll see the island of Ireland one day, where I believe I can make a difference. As one of the great Saints said 'every Saint has a past and every Sinner has a future'.

Farewell my brothers and sisters behind the walls and fences throughout the world, I remember all of you and your loved ones and those who help us, every day in prayer.

ICPO Writing Competition

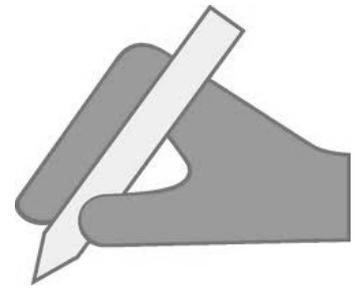


A Day in My Life

By K. Doyle, UK

- 6.00 am Up....I'm contemplating living even more years in cold concrete boxes...Feeling dejected I muse on Samuel Beckett's play 'Waiting for Godot'. The plot: two tramps waiting for the imminent arrival of someone. Is Godot coming? Where is he? The play ends as it begins, surprisingly with the non arrival of the mysterious Godot. What's it all about? We are mystified. Does Godot actually exist? All this talk about him. He must turn up, reveal himself, enlighten us. Godot is bringing good news, relief, things longed for, needed, fulfilling expectations....yeah!
- 8.06 Washed...dressed...cell door...officers...hot water...razor, mirror...Then...Doctor, Chaplain, Governor...all asking...Alright? Yeah...The truth is...quietly accepting the humiliation, deprivation and injustice. We're all waiting see...for this, that or the other...you know...for time to pass...change.
- I've been doing block (segregation) for years. Two fingers up to the system...The razor's blunt, it rips my skin until it bleeds.
- 8.31 Porridge...tea...exercise. The yard is a four cubicled 'cage'. Someone's cursing. 'You're a space cadet'. I keep it moving...Alright mate? A hundred sit-ups, press-ups and laps around the yard later. I sing 'something inside so strong' to the 25 other lads down here...someone shouts....shut it you rat...ha haa.
- 9.40 In cell pacing up and down...reading...God...o how long...send a sign so my enemies will see it and know you're on my side...imprisoned, the psalmist David cried...Send news of my release and escape from death...He escaped...He waited...It paid off see.
- 11.32 Lunch - vegan rations of veg and beans.
- 12.12 Kyle you plastic paddy come to the window...looking out I see buildings and rooftops. Little birds perched on masses of razor wire...Yeah Robo...Kyle if the Irish want the British out of Ireland so much, why are nearly all of them livin' in Britain...ha haa (we both laugh)...Well, my Mom and her entire family emigrated here in the sixties to find work, a better life see...er ok... Why did the Irishman cross the...Stop...Stop, no Irish jokes...Kyle listening? I'm going to the 'hospital' soon...Ah well we'll miss your jokes, God bless you...
- 12.35 In bed musing on another Beckett play...A man buried up to his neck in sand (He loved a happy theme)...stuck in limbo...like so many indeterminate/life prisoners in UK jails. Stuck waiting up to our necks in it...I re-read my parole knock back paper work...Ah the bitterness...the despair.
- 1.18 Coffee...sitting by the window...Godot turns up...in my mind. Beckett visits a 'hospital': on a ward a young man sits waiting by a window. Mister is she here yet?...Who, Beckett responds...Me Mammy, I'm waiting for me mammy. A Doctor friend explains...the boy's mother left him here years ago...couldn't cope no more. Went off to a better life...Portugal...she's never coming...He's still waiting. Everyday, the same. We can't tell him.
- 1.42 Shower time - it's cold.

ICPO Writing Competition



- 2.05 In cell sitting by the window, waiting...seagulls diving, screeching, scavenging.
- 2.15 Door...No 1 Governor. Alright?...Er...I'm still waiting...for passport photos and permission for the priest to sign the Irish documents...An Irish passport...Why? Do you want to live there?. Governor I've been waiting years to get it sorted. England is not my country of origin...yes leave it with me...he said the same thing a month ago.
- 2.45 Sweep and mop out cell. It's raining. Thunder and lightning.
- 3.10 Sitting by the window...just like the lad in the 'hospital'. Abandoned. I know how it feels...Beckett's inspiration was that poor lad's vain expectations. Kept in the dark. Don't I know it...me waiting for someone to arrive...with the necessaries...a completed application for Irish citizenship. I'll be kept waiting. Will I always be a plastic paddy? I need a reliable helping hand...I've given up!
- 4.05 Dinner - pasta, potato, soya milk.
- 4.50 Pacing up and down, hoping for something to arrive...instead...indigestion.
- 5.45 Two letters arrive! 1st...your mother's birth certificate has arrived...Fantastic...2nd...Good news your birth certificate has arrived...more good news...your mother was born in Ireland...As I understand it then you're already a fully paid up member of the Irish clan and would not need to register for Irish citizenship...WOW...Unbelievable...What? I've waited for so long to gain Irish nationality and it was mine all the time!...From birth! Ha ha haaa.
- 6.00 Jumping about, clapping, filled with joy thanking Godot so much...Arrived... Disbelief gone... waiting over... my Godot turned up, albeit via ICPO (thanks for that unexpected and reliable hand!)...Yo...lads, my Irish citizenship has come through...yeah does that mean you can go home to Ireland?...Ah I'll have to wait, wait and see...
- 9.30 In bed...waiting over...dreams can come true! Happy Days...now Godot (the David variety) can show me the way home!

ICPO Art Competition "Design Our Christmas Card"

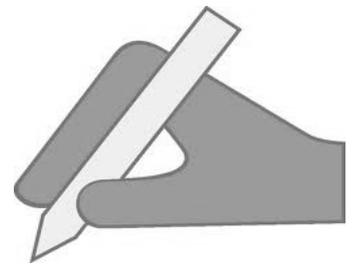


We want you to design this year's ICPO Christmas Card. A prize of **€50** (or equivalent) will be awarded to the design/picture selected for our card.

The design/picture should reflect what Christmas means to you and can be in whatever style you like. This card will be sent to all ICPO clients, families and other ICPO contacts.

The competition is open to all ICPO clients and entries must reach us at ICPO, Columba Centre, Maynooth, Co Kildare before **16th November, 2012**. Please indicate if you are happy for us to publish your name in *ICPO News* if your entry is printed and on the Christmas card if selected as the winning entry.

ICPO Writing Competition



A Day in My Life By Sheldon Smith, UK

My own inbuilt alarm clock, wakes me around 6am. Laying for a while, as my senses slowly kick into drive, pondering the new day, will it rain or will the sun rear it's golden mane, peering through curtains, seeing clear blue skies, not a drop of rain, smiling happily, it's sure going to be, a glorious day.

I'm up as a hare, out of it's sit, towel in hand and all the cleansing bits. Down the creaking corridor, into the soothing, refreshing shower, funny how magical water, running over oneself can be, I feel alive, free.

Here I am, dressed, full of life, sitting down to a mug of tea, quietness, peace, thinking for a while, all those memories, with clarity return. The warmth, as the heart merrily, contently beats. The noise, breaking silence, as other people stir, the groans from the same creaking floor, time to be away to work. Lock the wooden door.

Over through the checkpoint I go, show my pass, give in my key, on my way with, so much to see, up the lane, round the bend, left at the lights. Sauntering down cars flash by, they're sure in a rush, dual carriageways, tarmac, fumes, dust. Right at the ferns, it's a wee short cut you see, huge old trees, it feels like another place, tranquil, at ease, surely soothing my inner peace. Stopping for a moment as bird song draws me ever near, those sights ever changing. But clear.

There she stands, so proudly bold, her steeple, spire grasping for the clouds, those gothic archways, beautiful dressed stone, stained glass windows surrounded by tomb stones. She's over a hundred years old, oak pews, crimson, magenta altar, lit candles flicker, without falter. The Willows Catholic Church, is just where I work, how lucky am I.

Beautiful gardens, huge old trees, wild meadows and an orchard with it's many variety of old breed, apple trees. You just have to sit for a while, to immerse yourself in it's beauty. Enchanting, mesmerising, this sight will always be, as no one could ever tire of such wonders.

Down to the tool shed I go, passing the priest's house, I bump into old Joe. We have a banter, pass the time of day, he gives me instruction of priority today. Mass is at 9am, only a couple of hours away, Father Emmanuel says hello, he's got to dash, give the last rites, the comfort as we pass.

Out with the keys, in I go, into my work boots, on with the gloves, out with the wheelbarrow, brush, shovel, spade, fill up the strimmer and mower, check the oil, on the pull string kicking them into life, the smell of two stroke, reminiscent of childhood days. Around the cemeteries I go, those lush green grasses between headstone lined corridors, neat trim lines. As I mow.

The church bell tolls, it's 9am, down tools, away to Mass, prayer, songs, readings, sacraments, the lot. An hour or so later Mass has ended, we all gather for a banter and a brew, sharing news, views, but I've work to do, say my goodbyes, back to the cemetery, finish the grass, only a couple more hours they'll be done.

The housekeeper, Cath, calls me in, making me sandwiches, a cup of juice or tea, a few biscuits, that's set me up. A bit of banter as I thank her, some trees, I have to trim. It's 12.30pm, sun blazing down, not a breeze, as sweat trickles off the head, hitting the ground, drying immediately.

Those huge trees, with their over hangs, out with the chainsaw, I have plans, cutting deep the branches fall, wow there's a road, I couldn't see this at all. The chainsaw buzzes like a raging bee, making branches smaller, so I can get them in the barrow you see, over to the heap, twenty or so times I go, a large pyre, ready for a match.

Cleaning, washing, oiling machinery. Everything away tidy. The lock closed tightly on the shed, it's 4.30pm. I wish I could sit for a while to take more of it in. But the powers that be, set a time to return. I bid farewell to Fr. Manny and old Joe, say I'll see you tomorrow, as long as there is no rain or snow. Back down the way I went this morning, obviously taking time to stroll.

Just a day in my life, with more to enjoy I'm sure. Thank God for open doors.

Maeve Binchy Snell (28 May 1940 - 30 July 2012), known as **Maeve Binchy**, was a charming lady. She was known worldwide for her writing, her novels sold 40 million copies and were translated into 37 languages.



Three of her novels were made into films, *Circle of Friends*, *Tara Road* and *How About You*. Here in Ireland we remember Maeve for her warm personality, her genuine love of human beings, her kindness, her giving so much of her precious time to up and coming writers and novelists. She was naturally funny and witty and was an energetic speaker. Those who were lucky enough to have met her always spoke fondly of her and more often than not became a close friend. Asked how she wanted to be remembered, she said this: *"I'd like people to think I was a good friend and a reasonable story-teller and to know that thanks to all the great people, family and friends that I met, I was very, very happy when I was here"*.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam.

Con Houlihan passed away in August at the age of 86. A native of Castleisland in Kerry, he was probably Ireland's best loved sports journalist. He wrote for the Irish Press, Evening Press and Sunday Press before the group folded in 1995 much to his disappointment.



More recently he wrote for the Sunday World newspaper. A minutes silence was observed in his honour before Kerry's quarter final defeat by Donegal in Croke Park. In his last column, published the day after his death, he wished Katie Taylor well. In 2004 Con paid his final visit to Castleisland to unveil a bust of himself. On it he is described as a fisherman, turf-cutter, rugby player, teacher and writer. The bust depicted him with his hand up to his face, often he spoke in this manner because he was very shy. He campaigned against the building of a bypass around Castleisland and to his great annoyance they named the bypass after him. He was a giant of a man in body, mind and soul.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

"When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves"

- Viktor E. Frankl

Mark Rohan- 2012 Paralympic Champion

As a young man Mark Rohan had been passionate about sport, particularly Gaelic football. He played inter-county U21 football for Westmeath. He wore his county colours, maroon and white, with great pride. In November 2001 Mark was involved in an accident with his Honda motorbike which left him with a catalogue of horrific injuries and the doctors wondering if he could survive. Mark, however, proved them wrong and after a long spell in hospital and six months in the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dun Laoghaire, he began to realise that life after a spinal injury is possible.



On his website Mark says, *"In many ways, the accident has given me a wonderful life. I have travelled the world to play sport. I have learned about the depth of my resilience, and the essential goodness of so many people. I am facing challenges I would not otherwise have even contemplated. Being paralysed asks big questions of your spirit. From the outset I decided I was going to focus on the many positive things in my life, and rarely think of the negatives"*.

Rohan represented Ireland in wheelchair basketball from 2005 to 2009, before he chose to focus on handcycling. Since his first gold at the World Handcycling Championships in 2010, Rohan has consistently been top of the pile with wins in the 2011 UCI World Paracycling Cup, 2011 UCI World Paracycling Championships (time trial and road) and the 2012 UCI World Paracycling Cup (time trial). Winning the gold medal at the 2012 London Paralympic Games was a dream come true for Mark. His determination and faith in his own abilities won out and he accepted the gold medal for Ireland with pride. Mark will take a short break and then intends to try out other sports before focusing on Rio 2016. He also plans to promote disability sports and show people that there are real opportunities out there in sport even if you have a disability.



Your Letters



Admiration for Sr. Agnes

Having just received the summer issue of ICPO News, it having travelled halfway around the Midlands before reaching me at my new residence at Long Lartin, what a delightful surprise to see a photo of lovely Sister Agnes on the front cover.

To think and indeed know that this incredible lady is still helping others is a truly remarkable achievement (for her). So charming, so sincere, so kind, so patient and never forget so hard working. How does she do it?

In 1986 I was a wild young man of 24. Put bluntly, stone crazy. No man, woman or God could tell me what to do. However, Sister Agnes was the exception to that rule. Yes, I listened to Sister Agnes. I admired her and respected her and I still do. So did every one of my fellow inmates who had the privilege of knowing this incredible lady.

My man made picture board contains only photos of my children and close blood family. No exceptions. Yet the photo on the front of ICPO News of Sister Agnes will have its place there. As there is always a place in my heart and memory for Sr Agnes there is now a place for her with my children.

Sr Agnes will carry on doing what she is so good at doing for many years. She has all the qualities required. With just one more thought. Please stand for Saint Agnes of Ireland.

C.K., UK

Thank You to Liz and Breda Power

I would like to write a big thank you to Liz and Breda Power of the London ICPO.

I, as a Lifer inmate at HMP Swaleside, am very limited of giving much, if any, help to my 24 year old daughter who lives in London. Her partner turned out to be very violent towards her and her two young children. This, as you can imagine, caused all sorts of problems for both my daughter and her children.

Going into refuge time and time again. Coming back to her flat in London only to find more and more problems. The last straw was when her partner hit the youngest daughter of one year old violently.

My daughter is now in refuge but moves to a new area this week in fact. Hopefully this is a new start for her. With me being in here plus her mother also in prison she had no one to turn to for help, advice etc., also the fact that my daughter had no money to keep moving around.

There were lots more problems as you can imagine. Without the help of both Liz and Breda Power, giving her good, sound advice and no end to the other help they gave her, such as bringing her and the kids to visit me here, picking her up from refuges, driving her to her new flat, having her belongings plus furniture moved and I could go on and on.

So I take this chance to say a very special thanks to both Liz and Breda and the great job they do at the London ICPO.

J.J., UK



Sports

By Eoin O'Mahony

Gaelic Games

We have reached the sharp end of the season in both hurling and football and in both codes there might be startling new champions. First to the hurling and in late July Cork beat Waterford by the slimmest of margins, just a single goal separated these two. On the same day and in a packed Semple stadium, Kilkenny easily overcame Limerick 4-16 to 1-16, allaying fears that the Cats might have seen their best days. In the next round of the Championship, Galway beat Cork by 22 points to 17 and, although the contest was relatively equal for the first 35 minutes, Kilkenny went on to beat Tipperary easily 4-24 to 1-15 in the other semi. On the second Sunday in September Kilkenny faced Galway with hopes high west of the Shannon that this would be the year of the Tribesmen. While Kilkenny have certainly hit their end of season vein of form, Galway have been able to step up a gear of their own when it matters most. The final was a wonderful spectacle, played by two great teams. The spoils were shared that day with a replay to look forward to on 30th September. Incredibly, the minor final was also drawn.

In football, there may very well be an end of the 20 year wait for Donegal for a second title. Under Jim McGuinness, Donegal have learned the lessons of summer 2011 and scored freely and often, pushing past Kerry in their quarter final to set up a semi with Cork in Croke Park. In the other half of the draw, Mayo and Dublin beat Down and Laois respectively to set up an early September semi. To massive cheers in late August sun, Donegal overcame a very strong Cork team 16 points to 1-11 with a resurgent display of positive attacking football in the second half. Their huge following that day was complimented by both county managers. Mayo took the other final spot, narrowly beating the Dubs despite having built up a significant lead midway through the second half. Whatever happens in the final, there will be a name on the Sam Maguire that hasn't been there in a very long time.

Soccer

This summer saw a fine Euro competition shared between the Ukraine and Poland, although neither country's team made any significant impression on the results. Unfortunately, the Irish team never hit their stride with their interest in the tournament ending in the group phase. The semis saw Portugal take on current champions Spain and Germany take on Italy. The Spanish and Portuguese teams played out a frustrating match with Spain coming through on penalties 4-2. A meeting with Italy on the first day of July was ensured when the Italians outclassed Germany 2-

1. In truth it could have been much more with Pirlo showing the opposition how football should be played. The final was decided in the first half however when Silva and Alba got past the Italian defence to make it 2-0 at the break. Italy could not reply despite their tournament form and were overrun in the later stages of the game, with Torres and Mata making it 4-0 in the end. Spain are thus the first team to complete back to back European championships. They have not been ranked lower than world number two since the middle of July 2008.

Domestically, Sligo Rovers have continued their surge ahead of the Droogs and St Pat's to consolidate their Airtricity League lead. In late August with 8 games remaining, they are 9 points ahead of Drogheda United (albeit with a tough run in) and 11 points ahead of the Inchicore team. Barraclough has lead his team wonderfully on limited resources although with some worrying late season injuries, it is going to be a difficult sequence of games before the league title is decided on October 26th. The financial fate of several clubs below the top few also remains in the balance with the economic recession hitting gates and advertising revenues hard. Next year's 2013 league could be smaller still.

London Olympics 2012

Among the highlights of this year's Olympic Games for Ireland was Katie Taylor's gold medal at a games where women's boxing was entered for the first time. Given the number of Irish fans in the ExCel arena, Taylor had almost home advantage and she overcame her Russian opponent to win what many saw was her destiny and add an Olympic gold to her many World and European titles. John Joe Nevin won a silver medal in the bantamweight division and Michael Conlan joined Paddy Barnes in the ranks of bronze medal winners. Cian O'Connor won an equestrian bronze medal, marking the end of a difficult period for the Irish man.

The Great Britain team had a fantastic Games, making full use of their home crowd advantage as well as a focused approach to specific events such as cycling, rowing and on the track. Among their new heroes are Jessica Ennis (heptathlon), Mohammed Farah (long distance) and an extraordinary performance by Chris Hoy (cycling), adding to his previous medal haul. The track and field was certainly dominated (in both men and women's) by Jamaica. Blake and Bolt dominated the men's while Sally Ann Fraser Pryce excelled in the short distance races. Bolt alone added three golds to his tally and intends to cement his self-declared "greatest in the world" status by competing in the Rio games in 2016 in the long jump.



Brush up on your Irish with Caitriona ní Bhaoill

Smídín Gaeilge

Michael Collins

Micheál Ó Coileán (Mee-hall Oh Quill-Awn)



Rugadh Michael Collins i gCorcaigh i 1890	<i>Rug-ew MC I gur-kig i 1890</i>	Michael Collins was born in Cork in 1890
Bhí sé mar bhaill den IRB i 1909	<i>V shay mar vall den IRB i 1909</i>	He joined the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood) in 1909
Tar éis an Éirí Amach na Cásca, bhí sé san IRB agus Sinn Féin le DeValera	<i>Tar aysh eye-ree amock na Cawska, v shay san IRB agus SF le DeValera</i>	After the Easter Rising, he was in the IRB and Sinn Féin with DeValera
Chuaigh Collins agus Arthur Griffith go Sasana agus shínigh siad an 'Treaty'	<i>Hoo-ig Collins agus Arthur Griffith gu Sasana agus hee-nig sheed an 'Treaty'</i>	Collins and Griffith went to England and signed the Treaty
Tharla an 'Cogadh Cathracha' ansin	<i>Hor-la an Cuga Cah-rock anshin</i>	The Civil war took place
Mharaigh lucht an fhreasúra Collins i mBéal na Bláth ar an 18ú Lúnasa 1922	<i>Var-ig lookt on rass-ura Collins i Male na Blaw air on 18ú Lew-nasa 1922</i>	Michael Collins was killed by the opposition in Béal na Bláth on 18 th August 1922



Bonn Comóradh-
(Bow-n Come-ora)
Commemorative Coin

Labhair an Taoiseach Enda Kenny ag comóradh 90 bliana báis Michael Collins i mBéal na Bláth	<i>Lour on Tea-shock Enda Kenny egg come-ora 90 bleena bawsh Michael Collins i Mayl na Blaw</i>	The Taoiseach Enda Kenny spoke at the 90 th year anniversary of the death of Michael Collins in Béal na Bláth
Chríochnaigh Enda a oráid i nGaeilge	<i>Cree-nig Enda a ore-aud I ngway-lga</i>	Enda finished his speech in Irish
"Rath Dé ort Micheál Ó	<i>Rah Day Urt Mee-hawl Oh Quill-awn. Ore geowl hoo</i>	God be with you, Michael Collins. You were the music

Ireland's Native Trees

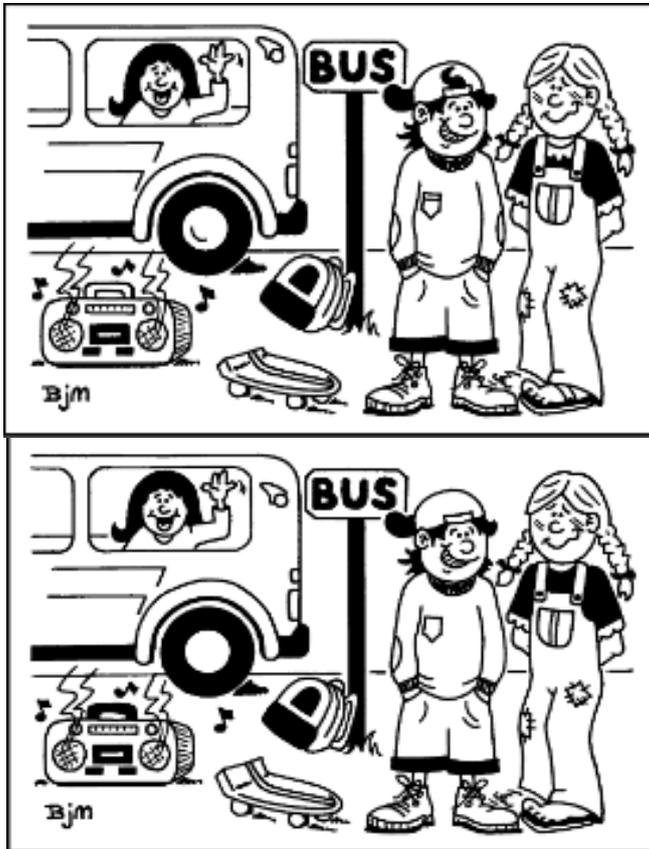
Ash
 Beach
 Birch
 Blackthorn
 Cedar
 Cherry
 Chestnut
 Crab Apple
 Elm
 Fir
 Hawthorn
 Hazel
 Holly
 Hornbeam

B D N T T W G U S Y F N C E V
 Z B G A U V O X X I Z R C N R
 F H P B W N U L N B A O H I C
 H O H L F O T Q L B P H E P G
 H L F A H F R S A I S T R W V
 C L E C Z I L P E X W W R T M
 A Y R K I E P P J H M A Y A H
 E I M T H L L F P U C H E S O
 B M Y H E L R O I I N B A T A
 N E G O A R P R C R N I X B K
 W X Q R B L E C U R P S P Q D
 Z Y C N A I E Z O X U C I E S
 D H C R E L M H O O C E D A R
 E L P A M S Y C A M O R E J H
 M A E B E T I H W K X P V M Y

Juniper
 Larch
 Maple
 Oak
 Pine
 Poplar
 Rowan
 Spruce
 Sycamore
 Whitebeam
 Willow
 Yew

Spot the Difference

Can you spot 10 differences between these two pictures?



Answers to Spot the Difference

1. Line on boy's pocket missing. 2. Strap on sandal coloured in. 3. Hair on cap missing. 4. Back of seat by girl's arm missing. 5. Line on Hub cap missing. 6. Collar on girl's top coloured in. 7. Radio handle coloured in. 8. Patch on pants moved up. 9. Musical note moved to right. 10. Back of skate board is longer.

Sudoku

		1				6	4
				7			8
4	7			2	3		
		8		5			9 6
			3	6			
6	9			7		5	
		5	1			9	2
	6		7				
	7	9				4	

Each Sudoku grid has a unique solution that can be reached logically without guessing. Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, as must ever 3x3 square.



RECENT EVENTS IN IRELAND



Ireland's Olympic Medallists: *Main picture: John Joe Nevin (silver). Inset left: Michael Conlon (bronze). Top right: Cian O'Connor (bronze). Bottom right: Paddy Barnes (bronze).*



The Irish Paralympic team (pictured left) were given a hero's welcome at Dublin airport as they returned home from the 2012 Paralympic Games in London. The team won a total of 16 medals, 8 gold, 3 silver and 5 bronze, making them the most successful Irish sports team ever.

Tall Ships Races 2012

Over 1 million people flocked to Dublin to visit the tall ships race from 23rd to 26th August. Forty majestic tall ships spent the weekend in Dublin harbour.

This photo shows a ship leaving the Liffey and heading out into open sea past Poolbeg lighthouse.

Photograph: Irish Defence Forces

